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DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES



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DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

THIRTY-FOURTH PRESIDENT

1953–61

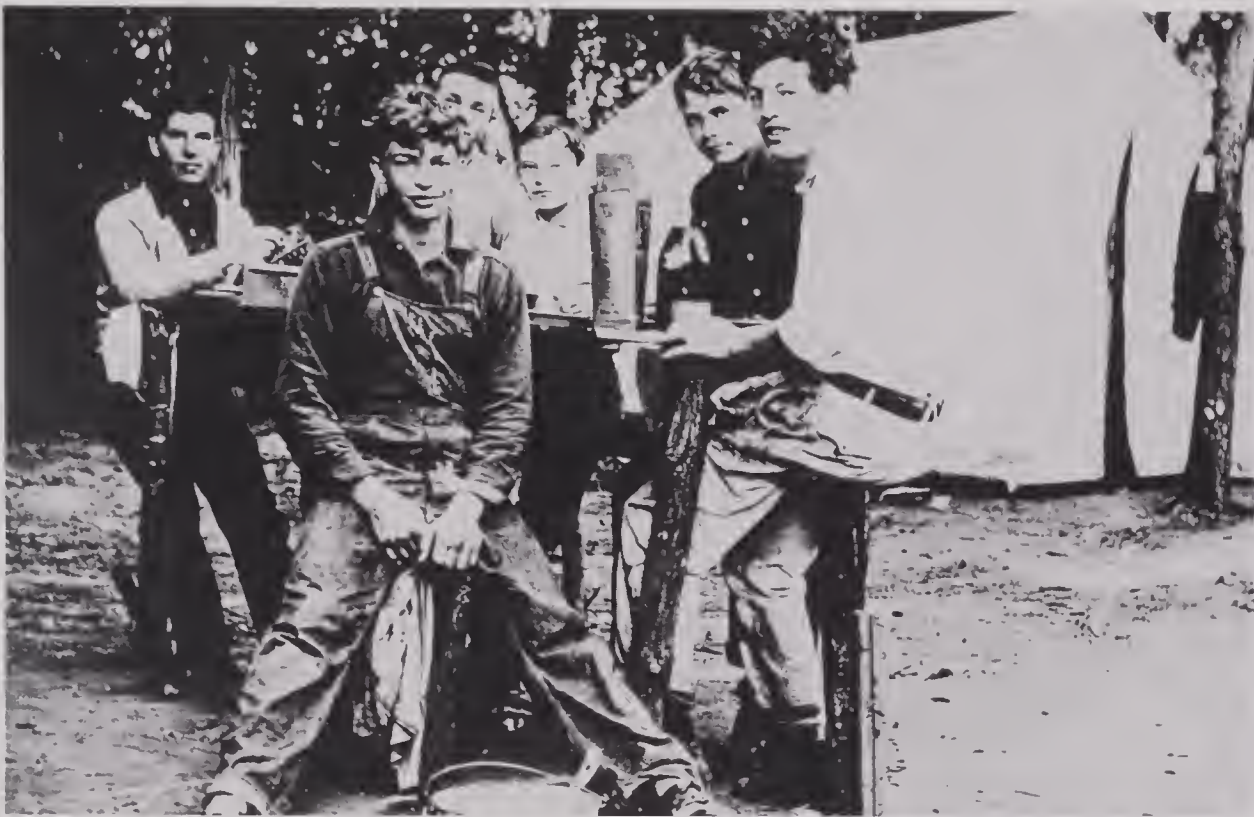


A popular World War II military hero who had achieved a distinguished Army career, Eisenhower led the nation during two Presidential terms of international peace and domestic prosperity. He negotiated an armistice in Korea, furthered international disarmament, reduced cold war tensions, and launched the U.S. space program. His domestic program accepted and even expanded some New Deal social welfare legislation, but he did not succeed in translating his own popularity into a broader victory for the Republican Party. He emphasized governmental economy and decentralization of federal projects through cooperation with state and local government and private enterprise. Although some have criticized him for not exercising greater leadership in the area of civil rights, he did send federal troops to Little Rock, AR, to enforce the court-ordered desegregation of Central High School. He was a strong and effective President whose historical reputation has improved greatly since leaving office.



ABOVE: Dwight Eisenhower (*far left*) poses with his parents, David and Ida, and brothers Edgar, Milton (*front*), Earl (*back center*), Arthur, and Roy in 1902.

ABOVE LEFT: Bureau of Engraving and Printing



Ike (*front center*) camps with friends along the Smoky Hill River just south of Abilene, ca. 1907.

The Eisenhauers came to America in 1741 from Germany, settling in the fertile farm country around Harrisburg, PA. The family belonged to the River Brethren religious sect, an offshoot of the Mennonites. David Eisenhower, Ike's father, came west in 1878 at the age of 14 with his parents and other family members to homestead near Abilene, KS. David, however, had ambitions other than farming and went off to Lane University in Leocompton, KS, to study engineering. There, he met fellow student Ida Stover, a bright young woman from Virginia. The two were married within a year, and the newlyweds returned to Dickinson County to open a dry goods store in the small farming community of Hope, KS, some 20 miles from Abilene.

The business failed when disastrous weather ruined the farm economy, and David found work with the Kansas-Pacific Railroad. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the third son of David and Ida Eisenhower, was born on October 14, 1890, in Denison, TX, during the brief period his father worked outside the state for the railroad. In 1892 his family returned to Abilene, where Ike grew to manhood. His father worked as a mechanic in the Belle Springs Creamery. From his pacifist and devout parents, Ike and his five brothers received strong religious training. Young Ike attended public schools and was a good student who

excelled in sports.

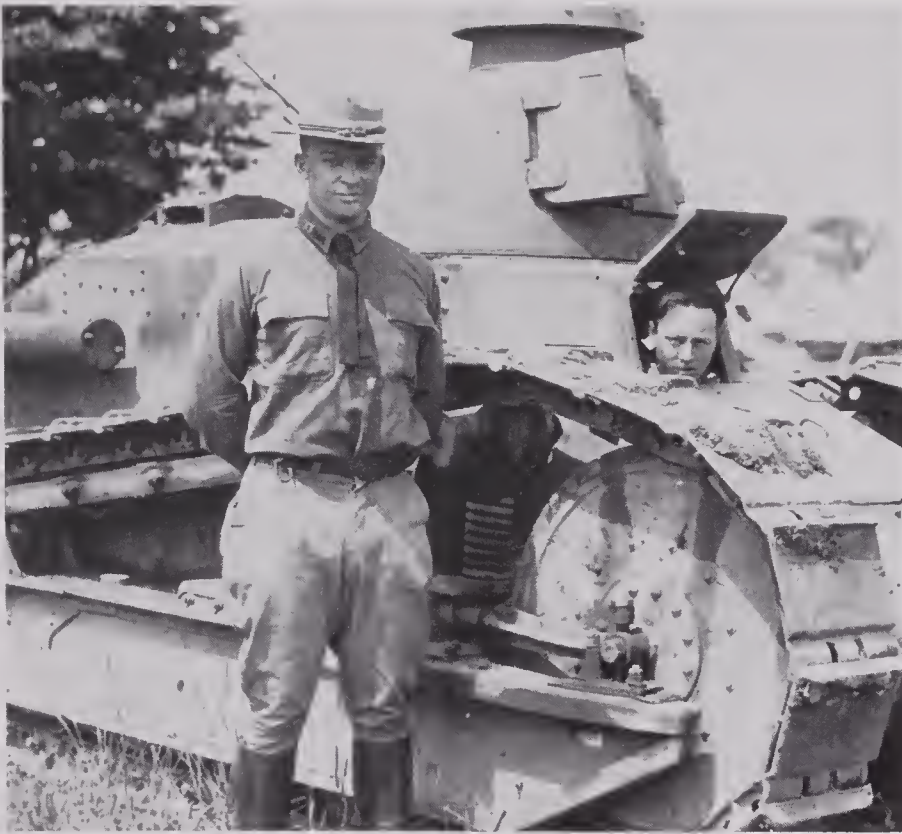
After graduation from high school, Ike worked for 2 years at the Belle Springs Creamery with his father to help put older brother Edgar through college. Edgar was expected to return the favor, but instead Eisenhower applied to West Point and Annapolis after learning about the "free education" offered by the U.S. military academies. He was too old for admission to the Naval Academy but was accepted by the Army, and in June 1911 he reported to West Point. Little did he know he was embarking on a course of public service that would span half a century.

At West Point, Ike was an above average student whose first love was athletics. When a knee injury ended his football career, he almost dropped out. Encouraged by his classmates to continue, Eisenhower graduated in the top third of his class and was commissioned an infantry officer with the class of 1915. (Later this class would be known as "the class the stars fell on," as over one-third of the members became general officers either just before or during World War II.)

During his first assignment as a second lieutenant at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX, Eisenhower met Mamie Geneva Doud of Denver. They were married in 1916 and would have two sons. The first child died in infancy, an event



In 1916 Second Lieutenant Eisenhower married Mamie Geneva Doud of Denver.



After World War I, Captain Eisenhower served with the Tank Corps at Fort Meade, MD.



The Eisenhowers pose with their first son, Doud Dwight, in 1919. Eisenhower later described 3-year-old Doud's subsequent death from scarlet fever as "the greatest personal loss of my life."

Eisenhower later described as the greatest personal loss of his life.

Eisenhower was frustrated at not serving overseas during World War I, but he impressed his superiors nonetheless. He established and commanded the tank training center at Camp Colt in Gettysburg, PA. His performance was so outstanding that he was one of only eight of his classmates to be promoted to the rank of temporary lieutenant colonel by war's end, a mere 3 years after graduation from West Point. The Eisenhowers fell in love with the Gettysburg area and some 30 years later would purchase a farm there—the only home they ever owned.

Promotion was slow between the two world wars, but Eisenhower further enhanced his reputation among the Army's senior officers with his excellent staff work and planning. In 1926 Ike graduated first in a class of 245 at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS. He then served with World War I hero Gen. John J. Pershing, preparing a guide to European battlefields for the American Battle Monuments Commission.

After graduating from the Army War College in 1928, he served in Washington, DC, as executive officer for the Assistant Secretary of the War until 1933. Major Eisenhower was then appointed chief military aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the

Army Chief of Staff, and in 1935 followed MacArthur to the Philippines, serving as assistant military adviser to the fledgling Philippine army. Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower returned stateside in December 1939 and assumed command of troops at Fort Lewis, WA. With war looming, he was a key officer in the famous Louisiana Maneuvers of 1941, the largest peacetime military exercise ever held in the United States. He received his first star in September 1941, just 9 weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

When the United States entered the war, Eisenhower was immediately called to Washington to serve in the War Plans Division of the War Department, where he began developing the plan for U.S. military action in the European Theater. Greatly impressed by this work, Chief of Staff George C. Marshall suggested that Eisenhower lead the U.S. forces in the endeavor.

Eisenhower's direction of the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, and Italy brought him international fame and proved him to be one of the world's leading military figures of the war. By February 1943 he had received his fourth star.

In December 1943 Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, and he displayed a genius for running the wartime coalition.

On June 6, 1944, the D-Day invasion of France signalled the beginning of the final phase of the European war. Germany would surrender 11 months later in May 1945, but first Eisenhower would be promoted to the newly created five-star rank of General of the Army on December 20, 1944.

Although Eisenhower viewed his leadership of the Normandy invasion as the single greatest accomplishment of his life, he felt humbled by the fame it brought him. In a June 1945 ceremony held in the ancient Guildhall, Eisenhower was made a "Freeman of the City of London." While greatly honored, he told those gathered that "Humility must always be the portion of any man who receives acclaim earned in the blood of his followers and sacrifices of his friends."

Eisenhower headed the American occupation forces in Germany until November 1945, when he returned to the United States to serve as Army Chief of Staff. During the next 3 years, he oversaw peacetime demobilization and the integration of the Army into the newly formed Department of Defense.

By now General Eisenhower was a national hero. His high school nickname of "Ike" and his distinctive grin were trademarks of his winning personality. *Crusade in Europe* (1948), the memoirs of his



The Supreme Allied Commander consults with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in France in March 1945.

European service, was a bestseller. He discouraged Presidential draft movements by both Republicans and Democrats in 1948, retired from the Army, and assumed the presidency of Columbia University in New York City. Late in 1950 President Truman asked him to return to active duty to command the military forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had been formed the year before. Eisenhower took a leave of absence from Columbia and returned to Europe as the first SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander,

Europe).

As the 1952 elections neared, an Eisenhower-for-President draft campaign began within the Republican Party. Ike was persuaded to return to the United States in June 1952 and to cast his lot with the Republicans. He made a vigorous run for the nomination against Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio and the isolationist wing of the GOP. He gained the party's nomination on the first ballot and chose a young Senator from California, Richard M. Nixon, as his running mate.



In June 1945, to honor his role in the defeat of Germany, the British conferred on Eisenhower the title of "Freeman of the City of London."

Library of Congress

Eisenhower proved to be a skillful and popular campaigner whose political views were those of the "middle way" between Old Guard Republican conservatism and the "big government" philosophy of the New Deal and Fair Deal Democrats. His promise to go immediately to Korea if elected in search of an end to the armed conflict was reassuring to the war-weary public. "I Like Ike" was the campaign slogan, and America did indeed like the war hero, for he won a landslide victory over his opponent, Senator Adlai E. Stevenson.

After his first day as President, Dwight D. Eisenhower wrote in his diary that "today just seems like a continuation of all I've been doing since July '41." If Ike was well prepared for his new responsibilities, so was his wife, Mamie Doud Eisenhower. Mamie first moved into the spotlight when her husband was named commanding general of U.S. forces in Europe in 1942. She felt it her duty to serve as a role model to the other war wives waiting for their husbands' return from overseas. She led a simple existence, avoiding an active social life, and volunteered time to wait tables at the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines Club. She saw Ike only once during his 3-year absence and wrote him almost daily. Ike in turn wrote her some 300 letters, which his



Eisenhower campaigns in Baltimore, MD, in September 1952. The popular hero won a landslide victory over Democratic Presidential nominee, Adlai E. Stevenson

Maryland State Police, photograph from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library



Eisenhower greets participants in a White House conference on schools. During his administration, Eisenhower supported federal aid for educational programs and school construction.

National Archives, 79-AR-3142B



Mamie's influence as a fashion trendsetter was apparent at the White House reception for the finalists in the 1960 Betty Crocker Homemaker of Tomorrow contest.

National Park Service, photograph from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

son, John, later published in a volume entitled *Letters to Mamie* (1977).

When her husband became President, Mamie did not seek out a public role as first lady. In her view, being the best hostess possible was her primary duty, and no one was better prepared than the woman who had entertained all the royalty of Europe as wife of the NATO commander.

She was never overwhelmed by the White House. She was "commander in chief" in the residence, quickly establishing her rule over the staff. She was very popular with the American public and set fashion trends that continually placed her atop the list of "best dressed women." Matching hats and handbags accompanied her famous hairstyle, which featured the "Mamie bangs." She was far from an activist first lady but seemed perfect for the times.

The newly elected President was a moderate who quickly recognized that he would have to accept much of the New Deal and Fair Deal programs that Roosevelt and Truman had achieved. Eisenhower, who had led the largest armed force the world has ever known, was also intimately aware of the high price paid for national defense. Ike feared the nation

would become bankrupt if its leaders were unable to control the military budget. In his first Presidential address to the United Nations, he warned:

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed.

The President's "Modern Republicanism" sought to achieve a balanced budget and to scale back the amount of social welfare legislation and the extent of government regulation of the economy. Eisenhower had a Republican majority in both houses of Congress for the first 2 years of his Presidency, but for the remainder of his time in office, he had to work with a Democrat-controlled Congress. Generally, the President and Capitol Hill cooperated constructively, and the Eisenhower administration achieved a good deal of important domestic legislation. Eisenhower signed laws broadening Social Security coverage and increasing the minimum wage. He authorized the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, a joint American-Canadian venture, which was opened to ship traffic in 1959. The President also supported federal aid for local health assistance, school construction, and educational programs, particularly for

The President discusses the Suez Crisis with Secretary of State John Foster Dulles on August 14, 1956.



Eisenhower proudly displays a brown trout, which he caught during a fishing trip to West Greenwich, RI, in September 1958. An avid sportsman and outdoorsman, President Eisenhower expanded the national park system with his "Mission 66" program.

the sciences.

A key program of the Eisenhower years was the interstate highway system. In 1919 Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower had participated in the Army's famous transcontinental truck convoy across America, a journey that took 3 months and highlighted the pitiful state of the nation's highway system. The convoy prompted Eisenhower to begin thinking about the need for good, two-lane highways, but true inspiration awaited his wartime service in Germany. The German autobahns, he said, "made me see the wisdom of broader ribbons across the land." The President signed the Federal Aid Highway Act on June 29, 1956, and thus began the biggest peacetime construction project of any description ever undertaken by the United States. Today, Eisenhower is recognized as the father of the modern interstate highway system, which totals over 40,000 miles.

Where possible, Eisenhower sought to minimize government activity. His administration lowered individual and corporate taxes, abolished the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, stressed reduction of the federal budget, and rejected proposals for public utility dam projects. During his administration, the 49th and 50th stars were added to the U.S. flag when he welcomed Alaska and Hawaii into the Union.

Eisenhower was an avid outdoorsman

and a strong proponent of the U.S. national park system. He believed it was the government's responsibility to preserve and manage these national treasures for the enjoyment of all Americans. In 1956 he announced a 10-year program, called "Mission 66," which would increase funding and expand the nation's park system.

In the field of civil rights, Eisenhower's view was that "there must be no second-class citizens in this country." Previous administrations had attempted to make progress through legislation that was blocked by opposition from southern Democrats. Eisenhower thought that the executive branch should first "get its own house in order," and he quickly ordered an end to segregation in the District of Columbia and on military installations. His efforts to integrate the military completed a process begun by President Truman in 1948.

Foreign affairs attracted most of Eisenhower's attention during his first term. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was a highly visible policymaker, but the President exercised the real power in rendering decisions in this area. While maintaining a strong defensive military posture, the new President sought to lessen cold war tensions. Fulfilling his campaign promise, he went to Korea after the election, and he eventually secured an



The Commander in Chief aboard the nuclear submarine *USS Seawolf* off the coast of Newport, RI, on September 26, 1957. Eisenhower oversaw the expansion of the U.S. military's nuclear capability while simultaneously promoting peaceful uses of atomic energy.

armistice that ended the conflict in 1953. The following year, the United States joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a collective security arrangement among anti-Communist governments.

Eisenhower wisely resisted the pressure inside his own administration for military involvement in Southeast Asia. He would not support France's ongoing colonial war because the French government would not announce publicly its intention to grant independence to Vietnam. Eisenhower correctly felt that the Vietnamese would "transfer their hatred of the French to us" if the United States replaced France as an occupying force. In addition, the old soldier demonstrated a practical wisdom when he told his National Security Council, "This war in Indochina would absorb our troops by divisions!" Eisenhower, however, did extend economic and military assistance to the government of South Vietnam after France withdrew its military forces in 1954. Unfortunately, subsequent administrations would fall victim to the temptation of sending U.S. soldiers to fight communism on the shores of Asia.

Joseph Stalin died 6 weeks after Eisenhower took office, and the President quickly took the opportunity to extend the olive branch to the Soviet government. In his April 1953 "Chance for Peace" speech,

Eisenhower exhorted that "the hunger for peace is too great, the hour in history too late" for governments to give their people mere empty promises or gestures. Eisenhower's initiative led to a gradual easing of East-West tensions during the early years of his Presidency. In 1955 the new Soviet leaders agreed with the other three occupying powers—France, Great Britain, and the United States—to sign a treaty creating an independent Austria. There was also talk of peaceful coexistence between capitalism and communism. For Eisenhower, the growing nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union created a sense of urgency. He tried to obtain an agreement with the Soviet Union limiting nuclear arms and halting testing. He proposed to the United Nations in 1953 what he called an "Atoms for Peace" program, which envisioned the peaceful use of atomic energy in developing countries. His efforts eventually led to the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1956.

Eisenhower met in 1955 with French, British, and Soviet leaders at a summit conference in Geneva, Switzerland—the first since the 1945 Potsdam Conference. The meeting of the Big Four focused on the German question and other East-West issues facing the former World War II allies. In a surprise move, Eisenhower pro-

posed to the Soviets an "Open Skies" plan, which entailed the interchange of military installation blueprints and mutual rights of aerial reconnaissance and inspection. Although the Soviets rejected "Open Skies," the Geneva Summit contributed to the continuation of a short-lived thaw in relations between the U.S.S.R. and the West. In 1993, some 38 years after Eisenhower's original proposal, the United States and Russia implemented a program of mutual nuclear inspections. The program, quite appropriately, was called "Open Skies."

The "spirit of Geneva" soon disappeared. In October 1956 the Russians put down a revolt in Hungary, and the United States offered asylum to the refugees of the uprising. The crisis in Hungary arose in the midst of Eisenhower's campaign for a second Presidential term. The election of 1956 found Eisenhower the dominant figure on the political landscape. Within the Republican Party he had withstood the threat that Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin had posed to his leadership. In 1953–54 the Senator continued his ongoing anticommunism crusade against the new administration. The President did not attack McCarthy directly but allowed the Senator to make political blunders that destroyed his own credibility. Eisenhower's view was that "nothing will be so effective in combating his particular kind of troublemaking



Scientist Werner von Braun (*right*) shows President Eisenhower and NASA Administrator Keith Glennan (*left*) a model of the Saturn rocket during the September 8, 1960, dedication ceremonies at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, AL. Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1958.

as to ignore him." While this strategy eventually succeeded, Eisenhower's unwillingness to counter McCarthy's more reckless allegations hurt the administration.

Eisenhower also surmounted major health problems in the 1956 Presidential race. He had suffered a serious heart attack in September 1955 and had an intestinal operation in June 1956, but by fall he had recovered enough to carry on a reelection campaign. Richard Nixon was again his running mate. The Democrats renominated Stevenson, but he lost to the popular incumbent President by an even more substantial margin than in 1952. The foreign crises that erupted during the later stages of the campaign sealed Eisenhower's triumph; few voters were willing to switch administrations while fighting raged in Hungary and along the Suez Canal.

In one of the most personally difficult actions of his Presidency, Eisenhower, late in 1956, joined the Soviet Union and the United Nations in criticizing the joint French, British, and Israeli attack on Egypt, which was aimed at forcing the Arab

thought were violating Egypt's national sovereignty, was well received by Third World nations. In 1957 Eisenhower announced what became known as the "Eisenhower Doctrine," which committed the United States to helping Middle Eastern countries resist communism. The next year U.S. forces briefly intervened in Lebanon at the request of the Lebanese President. The Middle Eastern problem would remain an intractable one for American policymakers.

The second term brought more foreign and domestic problems and fewer political successes than the President had enjoyed during his first 4 years. In October 1957 the Soviets launched Sputnik, the first earth satellite. The United States would counter 4 months later with the launching of its own satellite, Explorer I, but the psychological defeat aroused the country. In response, the President created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958. Ever the moderate, Eisenhower did not advocate a crash program to regain the lead in space from the Soviet Union. What he could not share

nation to reopen the Suez Canal. The principled stand Eisenhower took against his own allies, whom he

with his countrymen was the fact that, at his direction, secret U-2 reconnaissance aircraft had been overflying the Soviet Union with regularity since July 4, 1956. Because of this intelligence source, he was well aware of the limits of the Soviet military threat. Eisenhower also knew that the United States would soon begin a reconnaissance satellite program as well as continue the U-2 missions. Ironically, by launching Sputnik first, the Soviets had established the principle of "freedom of space," which precluded any grounds for future protest they might have lodged against overhead surveillance by the United States.

Civil rights confronted Eisenhower with hard choices in his second term. In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, the Supreme Court had declared segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional. Eisenhower has been criticized by some historians for not lending his moral authority to the 1954 court ruling. However, in September 1957 he deployed federal troops to Little Rock, AR, to implement the court-ordered enrollment of blacks at Central High School when local and state authorities tried to block the action. That same year Eisenhower signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1957. The act created a Civil Rights Commission along with other provisions and was the first significant



During the Eisenhower administration, black Americans began turning toward demonstrations and sit-ins to express their demands for equality.

National Archives, 306-ST-818-63-4118



ABOVE: Eisenhower meets with Martin Luther King, Jr. (left) and A. Philip Randolph (right) in the Oval Office on June 23, 1958. White House staffer E. Fredrick Morrow stands behind King.

ABOVE RIGHT: Nikita Khrushchev and his wife join the Eisenhowers at a state dinner during the Soviet Premier's September 1959 visit to the United States.



piece of federal legislation in this area since Reconstruction. In 1960 he supported another bill providing voter registration protection for blacks. Despite these actions, his critics charge that the President's overall record on civil rights did little to meet the demands of a black community that was turning to demonstrations and sit-ins to make its grievances known.

The recession in 1958 and a general dissatisfaction with the Republican Party after its 6 years in power brought impressive Democratic gains in the congressional elections that year. The Democratic opposi-

tion increased its majority in the Senate, where a number of hopefuls for the 1960 Democratic Presidential nomination vied for public attention. On the Republican side, Vice President Nixon seemed the clear frontrunner.

Foreign policy issues dominated Eisenhower's last 2 years in office. Fulfilling a 1954 commitment to Nationalist China, the President

backed that government's resistance to Communist China's bombardment of the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu. Seeking further improvement in relations with the Soviet Union, Eisenhower invited Premier Nikita Khrushchev to tour the United States. During the Khrushchev visit in 1959, the two world leaders discussed international issues at the Presidential retreat at Camp David, MD. In May 1960 the promise of a relaxation of international tensions faded. After an American U-2 reconnaissance jet was shot down inside the Soviet Union, Khrushchev abruptly

Lyndon Johnson speaks with the former President aboard the Presidential plane in 1965. White House successors often consulted Eisenhower about matters of state.



ended a Paris summit meeting and canceled the reciprocal trip Eisenhower had planned to the Soviet Union.

Tensions flared elsewhere in the world as political factions clashed in Laos and secessionist and revolutionary elements fought in the former Belgian Congo (Zaire) just after the nation had achieved independence. Disagreements between the United States and Cuba led to a rupture in diplomatic relations as Fidel Castro's government began favoring the Soviet Union. Finally, the situation in South Vietnam continued to deteriorate. Eisenhower had sent large amounts of economic aid and some military assistance, but the total number of U.S. military advisers in South Vietnam was well under 1,000 as the administration prepared to leave office.

The 1960 election of John F. Kennedy was a great disappointment to Eisenhower. His campaigning for Nixon in the latter stages of the election had helped to make the result very close. In a farewell address to the nation on his last day in office, the old soldier warned his fellow citizens of the need to be on guard against the acquisition of unwarranted power by the "military-industrial complex." The term thereafter became a part of the American political lexicon as a series of Presidents confronted the demand for increased expenditures for the cold war and nuclear



Eisenhower greets President-elect John F. Kennedy in December 1960. The election of the Massachusetts senator was a disappointment to Eisenhower, who had campaigned for Vice President Richard Nixon.

National Park Service, photograph from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library

The image of Eisenhower golfing was a popular one during his Presidency. With the increased availability of his Presidential records, however, Eisenhower is seen less as a grandfatherly, golfing-playing President and more as an active Chief Executive skilled at the “hidden hand” style of governing.

arms race far less successfully than Eisenhower.

Eisenhower's resistance throughout his Presidency to the great political pressure for increased federal spending was an important achievement. He balanced the budget in 3 of the 7 full fiscal years during which he served, and at no time in the other years did the deficit exceed 2.3 percent of the gross national product. His conservative position on taxes and spending, while politically unpopular, ensured that there was a balance or surplus in the government's fiscal accounts, except during recession. Eisenhower brought the budget to structural balance and kept it there. His accomplishment is all the more remarkable in view of the economic records of subsequent Presidents.

Out of office, Ike retired to his farm in Gettysburg, PA, and wrote his memoirs. He enjoyed being a gentleman farmer, raising purebred Angus cattle, and spending time with his four grandchildren. During his retirement years, his successors in the White House often consulted him on important matters of state. Eisenhower died on March 28, 1969, at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC. His widow and son, John S. D. Eisenhower, survived him.

In the 1960s Eisenhower's historical standing suffered in the shadow of

the John F. Kennedy mystique. Shortly after he left office, a poll of historians ranked Eisenhower as a “below average” Chief Executive when compared to all who had held the office before him. He was perceived as a grandfatherly, golf-playing, caretaker President who had served merely as chairman of the board during his tenure in the White House. Some 30 years later, however, Eisenhower has achieved a “near great” ranking in the scholarly community. The reason for this amazing turnaround is twofold. First, the series of “failed Presidencies” (an assassination, the Vietnam War, Watergate) that followed his made Eisenhower's 8 years of peace and prosperity look very good in comparison. Also, as his Presidential files have become available for research at the Eisenhower Library, there has been growing evidence that Eisenhower was indeed an engaged leader who set the policy of his administration. Historians and political scientists



began crediting him with a “hidden hand” style of governing that left few public traces of his efforts but brought impressive results.

Dwight D. Eisenhower handled the Presidency with skill and determination, and his historical position is likely to remain secure and even improve in the years ahead.



THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER LIBRARY

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in Abilene, KS, presents visitors with an architectural arrangement that differs markedly from all other Presidential libraries. Unlike the typical library housed under a single roof, the Abilene facility comprises five structures: the library, the museum, the Place of Meditation, the visitors center, and the boyhood home. Collectively, the five buildings, located on a park-like mall, are known as the Eisenhower Center. A larger-than-life bronze statue of General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower provides a central focus for the 22-acre site, and a grouping of five monumental pylons defines the eastern boundary of the complex.

Built entirely with private funds (as are all Presidential libraries in the National Archives), the Eisenhower Center was developed through the efforts of many individuals over a span of five decades. At the end of World War II, a number of Kansans who wanted to honor Eisenhower for his wartime service organized the Eisenhower Foundation. After the death of Eisenhower's mother, Ida Stover Eisenhower, in 1946, the Eisenhower brothers donated to the foundation the family home located on the southern edge of town. The modest three-bedroom dwelling, built in 1888 by an Abilene schoolteacher, was the Eisenhower

home from 1898 until 1946 and witnessed the growth to maturity of Arthur, Edgar, Dwight, Roy, Earl, and Milton Eisenhower. (The third son, Paul, died in infancy.) A classic example of the two-story clapboard, carpenter-designed home constructed throughout the Midwest during the late 19th century, the boyhood home is furnished with the original furniture and artifacts enjoyed by the Eisenhower family.

The first building project of the Eisenhower Foundation, the museum, was begun in 1952, the year in which Eisenhower first won the Presidency. Completed in 1954, the building, constructed of Kansas limestone, set the architectural precedent that all subsequent buildings at the center would follow. The addition of an east wing in 1971 doubled the museum's size, providing more than 30,000 square feet of exhibit space.

The museum has five galleries: an Introductory Gallery in which the visitor can view a synopsis of Eisenhower's life; a Military Gallery, which tells the full story of Ike's military career and World War II service; a Presidential Gallery, which illustrates the major events, issues, and accomplishments of his administration; a First Lady Gallery, which offers displays on Mamie Eisenhower; and a Changing Gallery, which features special themes and major traveling exhibitions.



ABOVE: Dedicated in June 1985, this bronze statue of General of the Army Eisenhower serves as a focal point for the Eisenhower Center.

OPPOSITE PAGE: The Eisenhower Museum features more than 30,000 objects from Ike's boyhood, 40-year military career, and two-term Presidency.



Relatives and descendants of the 34th President gather for a photograph at Ike's boyhood home.



The museum's galleries bring to life the "Happy Days" of the 1950s during which Eisenhower was President.

The museum's 35,000 artifacts, of which approximately one-third are on display at any given time, constitute a largely untapped source of research materials for students of military, political, and art history as well as for biographers of Eisenhower and his associates. One of the most striking components of the museum's holdings is the collection of orders, awards, and medals presented to Eisenhower during and after the war. The Britt Brown Small Arms Collection contains examples of most U.S. military small arms used during World War II as well as many of the ancillary items used with the weapons. A large collection of political cartoons, consisting primarily of original drawings, and a vast array of campaign objects, including posters, buttons, and jewelry, reflect the political issues, events, and personalities of the 1950s.

The museum's fine collection of original art includes paintings by Eisenhower and other artists, prints from several centuries, sculpture, art glass, tapestries, and ceramics. Its oriental art objects include such items as scrolls, cloisonné, and lacquer work. Of special interest are several bronzes and paintings by western artists. The museum's remaining holdings include philatelic and numismatic items of note.

Although the Eisenhower Foundation originally formed in order to develop a

memorial honoring Eisenhower's wartime service, foundation members realized that the general's election to the Presidency signalled the beginning of a new era in the history of the center. Soon after Congress passed the Presidential Libraries Act in 1955, the foundation, led by former Kansas Senator Harry Darby, initiated a movement to construct a Presidential library in Abilene. The 1955 act authorized the National Archives and Records Service to operate and maintain any privately built library constructed to store and service the archives generated during a President's term of office. Darby and his associates worked with Kansas Governor George Docking and leaders of the state's legislature to formulate legislation creating the Eisenhower Presidential Library Commission. Through public subscription, the commission, along with the Governor's National Committee for the Eisenhower Presidential Library, raised the funds necessary to build a suitable facility.

On October 13, 1959, the day before his 69th birthday, Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke to a crowd at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Presidential library bearing his name. He told those present of his hope that future scholars visiting the library would study the events of the past half century with a concern primarily for "the ideals, principles, and trends that provide



The museum's collection of original art includes several paintings by Eisenhower.

guides to a free, rich, and peaceful future in which all people can achieve ever-rising levels of human well-being."

The two-story library is built of the same Kansas limestone used to construct the museum. Upon entering the building, the visitor will find that its grand lobby, with a 35-foot-high ceiling, is faced with polished Italian book-matched marble, which contrasts with the rough-cut exterior stone. The facility's ornamental bronze work features a motif of bison heads and native bluestem prairie grass symbolizing the surrounding Great Plains environment. The library contains a research room for scholars, large archival stack areas, an auditorium, a photographic laboratory, two exhibit areas, and staff offices. A majestic interior courtyard, lit by skylights and a large chandelier, serves as a reception hall for the library's frequent public programs.

The library's manuscript holdings, which amount to more than 22 million pages, document not only Eisenhower's life and times but also the careers of his military, political, and government associates. Because of its rich archival collections, the Eisenhower Library has developed a deserved reputation as one of the world's premiere research facilities for the study of recent American history. The library's 400 manuscript collections include the papers and records of 15 Cabinet secretaries, 30



In May 1992 the Eisenhower Library celebrated its 30th anniversary with a rededication program and a reunion of former staff members.

Hundreds of scholars from around the world visit the library's research room every year to take advantage of the rich archival resources.



sub-Cabinet officials, 55 Presidential assistants, 24 White House offices, and 15 Presidential commissions and committees. Also among the manuscript holdings are the papers of several Eisenhower family members, including Mamie Doud Eisenhower, John S. D. Eisenhower, and Milton Eisenhower.

Twentieth-century military history is also well-documented as the library holds the papers of 33 general officers, including NATO Supreme Commanders Alfred Gruenther and Lauris Norstad and famous World War II generals Courtney Hodges, Walter Bedell Smith, and "Lightening Joe" Collins. The "Army Unit Records" collection totals 1.2 million pages and documents the operations of the hundreds of individual army units that fought in the European Theater during World War II.

Although historical papers and records constitute the core of the library's research materials, the manuscripts are supplemented by an audiovisual archives consisting of over 210,000 photographs, 585,000 feet of motion picture film, and 2,300 hours of audio recordings. A collection of more than 500 oral history transcripts, amounting to over 30,000 pages, also complements the personal papers and government records deposited in the library. These transcripts provide information on all phases of Eisenhower's life as well as on

the major events associated with his military and civilian public service.

Hundreds of researchers from around the world visit the Eisenhower Library each year to examine its rich historical collections. Numerous articles, books, theses, and dissertations have been based wholly or in part on the library's materials. In recent years two Pulitzer Prize-winning books, *Bearing the Cross: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (1986) by David J. Garrow and *The Heavens and Earth: A Political History of the Space Age* (1985) by Walter A. McDougall, were produced by scholars who conducted research in Abilene. Although doctoral candidates preparing dissertations outnumber any other single category of researchers, the library's users include college professors, master's degree candidates, college undergraduates, freelance writers, government historians, high school students, and amateur historians. The average researcher visit is 4 days, with many scholars in residence for several weeks. Some 25 percent of the researchers are from overseas.

Additional information about the library's historical resources, as well as information on research procedures, may be obtained by writing for the library's publication *Historical Materials in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library*.

In recent years the library has developed innovative programs to bring its unique historical resources to the general public. Guided tours that include hands-on experience with historical documents are given frequently to high school and college history and government classes; research projects have been developed that offer foreign language students the opportunity to learn their language through analyzing and interpreting original documents written in French, Spanish, and German; directed research experiences have been created for high school honors students; and workshops are given for professional educators to encourage the utilization of historical documents in public school curriculum design.

From 1962 to 1966, the center was administered jointly by the Eisenhower Foundation, which continued to operate the home and museum, and the National Archives and Record Service, which staffed the library. In 1966 the foundation turned over the home and museum to the National Archives. That same year the Eisenhower Presidential Library Commission completed the Place of Meditation chapel, in which President and Mrs. Eisenhower and their first-born child, Doud Dwight, are interred. The chapel was then transferred to the National Archives as well.

In 1974 the center's building program



Members of Elderhostel, one of the many public programs offered by the center, salute General Eisenhower.

LEFT: In 1966 the Eisenhower Presidential Library Commission completed the Place of Meditation chapel, in which President and Mrs. Eisenhower and their first-born son are interred.

concluded with the construction of a large visitors center. This modern structure houses a sales area offering commemorative items to visitors and a 300-seat auditorium, which is used for public showings of the library's visitor orientation film as well as for conferences, symposia, banquets, and other special events.

A wide range of public programs complement the center's museum displays and archival research. The year 1990, which marked the centennial of Eisenhower's birth, witnessed such major events as a conference on civil rights during Eisenhower's Presidency; a symposium on the "Living White House," featuring children and grandchildren of recent Presidents; addresses by former Presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan; and a grand finale on the 100th anniversary of Eisenhower's birthday, October 14, that included a World War II vintage aircraft show, a replicated World War II battalion-sized encampment, a USO show, a Billy Graham church service, and a world-class fireworks display.

In 1994, on the 50th anniversary of D-Day, the library hosted a 2-day national conference that brought together military scholars as well as key British, American, French, and German participants in that epic World War II event. The Abilene commemoration also provided the occa-

sion for an emotional reunion of dozens of Normandy Invasion veterans from throughout the United States.

Other library-sponsored programs have included an annual "Eisenhower Era" Elderhostel and scholarly conferences on such varied topics as the "1950s," the "American Dream," the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Women in the Service of Their Country," and the 1952 Presidential election.

Public areas of the Eisenhower Center are open every day (Christmas, New Year's Day, and Thanksgiving excepted) from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. Public hours are extended in the summer months. The library's research facilities are open Monday through Friday, federal holidays excepted, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. by appointment. A fee is charged at the museum for all persons 16 years of age and older. Admission to all other buildings is free.



In 1990, as part of the centennial celebration of Eisenhower's birth, former President Ronald Reagan spoke at the Eisenhower Center.



THE PRESIDENCY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

During the two centuries that the United States has functioned as a democracy, the institution of the Presidency has emerged as the central focus of the nation's political affairs. Through the crises that have confronted Americans over this period—a bitter civil war, world wars, economic depressions and panics, and major social upheavals—and in the moments of triumph and accomplishment, the Presidents have become the personification of what the United States stands for and seeks to be. The 40 men who have sat in the Oval Office thus represent an important source of continuity and confidence as citizens of the United States contemplate their government and its affairs.

The quality of the Presidents has been varied and often controversial. Some of them have been great men—Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Others have been failures and disappointments. Many have grown while in office; others fell short of demonstrating the qualities of character needed for Presidential success. The Presidency has

George Washington took his oath of office on the balcony of New York City's Federal Hall on April 30, 1789. As America's first President, Washington set the standards for all subsequent Chief Executives.

Library of Congress

usually defied simple generalizations and easy explanations about why some succeed in its duties and others fail.

The Presidency and the young United States of America did not seem destined for world leadership when the office was created during the 1787 Constitutional Convention. In 1789, when the Constitution went into effect, the nation was a small, rural, predominantly agricultural republic that consisted of 13 states along the eastern coast of North America. The population stood at 4 million people in a country that had virtually no weight in world affairs. Two centuries later, the United States has been transformed into an urban, industrial nation of 50 states extending westward to Alaska and Hawaii. The number of Americans stands near 260 million, and the country has become a superpower in economic, political, and military terms.

As the nation has grown, the institution of the Presidency has evolved with it. The 19th century was a time when the office expanded its powers somewhat, but a fundamental evolution of the modern Presidency began at the turn of the 20th century with the contributions of William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson. The emergence of the strong Presidency has taken place for a number of reasons. Faced with the chance to accomplish goals that were in the na-

tional interest, Presidents have turned to powers that were implied but not expressly stated in the Constitution. As both domestic and foreign demands on the government increased, Cabinet departments were expanded or newly established to meet these expanding requirements. Correspondingly, the size of the Presidential staff grew as special assistants and aides were added to support the work of the Chief Executive. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as the economy became industrialized and the population urbanized, regulatory agencies in the executive branch proliferated to deal with the growing complexities and inequities of national life.

The United States became a world power by 1900, with a consequent growth of the role of the President as a diplomatic leader and as Commander in Chief of the nation's military forces. As a result, the apparatus of the Presidency grew to meet these enhanced world responsibilities. The world wars of this century proved powerful stimulants to the rise of a strong and often imperial President.

All of this would have seemed impossible during the 19th century. At that time the national government was relatively small and easy for a President to administer. Often the President would have only one secretary or clerk to assist him.



President and Mrs. Lincoln preside over the 1862 New Year's reception at the White House. Until the need for more stringent protective measures became apparent, such receptions were commonplace and made the President highly accessible to the public.

The White House

Presidents drafted their own speeches and messages and usually had to write them out in longhand. Military commissions, appointments to office, and other documents had to be signed by the President. The only time that an incumbent had any semblance of a staff was when he borrowed clerks or specialists from the various departments and agencies of the government. The President sought advice mainly from his Cabinet, or his "official family" as it was known, and from friends and colleagues in the political community.

As the first citizen of the nation, the President was expected to be accessible to the people. Regular public receptions at the White House were common, and the people stood in line to shake hands with the President. A Chief Executive could make speaking tours of the country during his term of office, though Presidential travel was less frequent than in the 20th century. When a President ran for reelection, it was regarded as undignified for him to campaign personally, and no President did so successfully until Woodrow Wilson in 1916.

Security for the President was rudimentary during the 19th century. Abraham Lincoln's assassination in 1865 brought some Secret Service protection for subsequent Presidents, but it was still relatively easy to see the President at the White

House during the first three decades of the 20th century. James A. Garfield in 1881 and William McKinley in 1901 were two more victims of the inadequacies of Presidential protection before the advent of institutionalized security procedures.

The role of the President in American political life was less marked before 1900. After the 1830s political parties handled most of the campaigning duties. A nominee for the Presidency would make a speech formally accepting the decision of his party and issue a letter of acceptance that would serve as a major campaign document. After the Civil War, the practice of "front-porch" campaigns emerged. James A. Garfield and Benjamin Harrison began this campaign style, and it reached its peak with William McKinley's race in 1896. More than 750,000 people came to his home in Canton, OH, during August, September, and October 1896 to hear McKinley give graceful addresses that were reprinted the following day in newspapers all over the country. McKinley's rival, William Jennings Bryan, made a "whistlestop" campaign of the country. Although he lost, the new technique eventually became standard practice in the century to come.

The Presidential campaign itself took some time to emerge. From George Washington through John Quincy Adams, there were no true campaigns in the mod-

ern sense. Presidents did not have to be party leaders, and congressional caucuses and state legislators chose Presidential candidates. The candidates directed their appeals to Congress and the legislatures rather than to masses of voters.

By 1828, however, all the states except Delaware and South Carolina had turned to the selection of electors by popular vote. Andrew Jackson in 1828 was the first Presidential candidate to be popularly elected in the modern sense. Further democratization of the process occurred in 1832, when both the Democrats and their Whig opponents held the first national conventions to nominate candidates for President.

In 1840 the election of William Henry Harrison began a practice of electioneering that scholars have called "spectacular politics." The Whigs portrayed Harrison as a national hero who had lived in a log cabin. They used campaign slogans and songs and sought voter participation in torchlight parades. Voter turnout in the election increased. Political parties paid more attention to the popular image that their nominee would present on the campaign trail.

By the end of the 19th century, the appetite for the politics of display and spectacle gave way to campaigns of education that showered the voters with millions

Presidential campaigns have become a fundamental part of the American political process. This 1880 campaign poster helped James Garfield win the White House.

Library of Congress



of documents and lengthy speeches. The early part of the 20th century saw the rise of merchandising techniques that were borrowed from business and marketed the candidates through advertising and appeals to the voters as individuals. In comparison to the 19th century, the role of the political party decreased in Presidential elections while the degree of popular interest and involvement in these Presidential elections fell off from the high levels of the 1880s and 1890s. In the late 20th century only about one-half of the eligible electorate votes in a Presidential contest in contrast to the 75 percent or more of the electorate that voted a century ago.

Since 1900 the President's political, economic, military, and diplomatic powers have expanded beyond what predecessors of a century ago could have imagined. The size of the executive branch has grown dramatically. The complexities of the office in an era of instant communication require hundreds of special advisers at the White House. The President has become a world figure whose health, opinions, and movements can affect economic markets and political events. Television and radio transmit his statements to the rest of the world in an instant.

Traditionally, until the early years of the 20th century, the President did not leave the continental United States during his

term of office. Theodore Roosevelt broke this precedent by traveling to the Panama Canal Zone in 1906, though he did not conduct business with foreign leaders. After World War I, Woodrow Wilson went to Europe for the Paris Peace Conference to negotiate the Treaty of Versailles. Now Presidents can travel to any part of the world at a moment's notice. More is known about the President's views than at any other time in the past. To protect him from danger, the Secret Service has insisted on tight security for the Chief Executive. The result is that the President is better known to the world, but very much less accessible to the public at large.

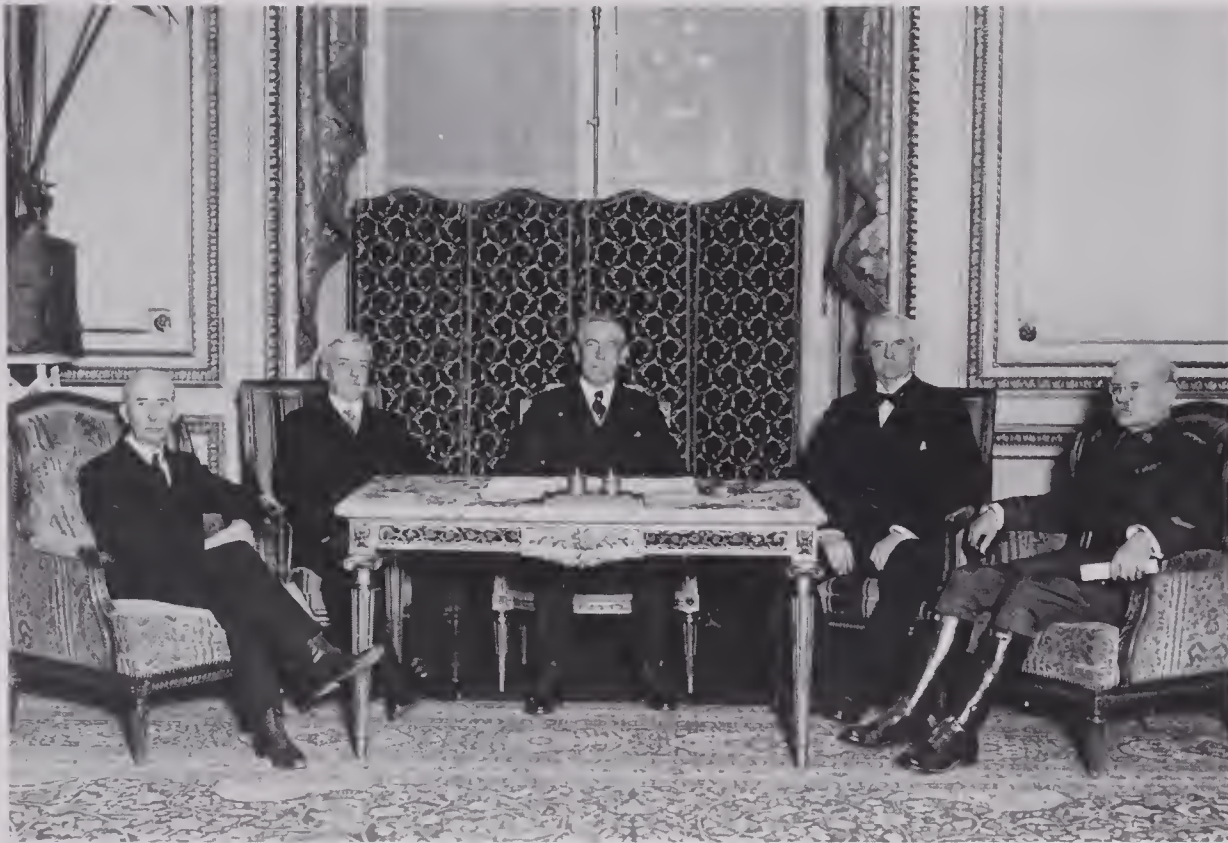
As the nation's chief diplomat, the President is responsible for the formulation and execution of foreign policy. Through the Department of State he appoints and supervises a large diplomatic corps, negotiates treaties with other nations, administers foreign aid, officially receives world leaders and their representatives, attends international meetings and peace conferences, and makes visits to foreign countries as a kind of goodwill ambassador of the United States. At times of foreign crisis in this century, during two world wars and the cold war that began after 1945, the President has emerged as a leader of democratic forces.

The President must discharge the con-

tradictory roles of serving as the bipartisan spokesman for the American people as a whole while also being the leader of his political party. He makes recommendations to Congress regarding legislation, oversees the economy, assures domestic tranquillity, and provides relief during natural disasters. He is also the chief of state, who participates in a variety of ceremonial activities and embodies the values of the nation when he speaks on its behalf.

To become President and to be reelected requires that the Chief Executive engage in a hectic and exhausting round of political campaigning. That process has been demanding since it became common for candidates to make an active canvass on their own behalf. In the last true "whistle-stop" campaign before the advent of modern air travel, Harry S. Truman traveled more than 31,000 miles and delivered 356 speeches during a period of 5 weeks. Public financing now provides the money for Presidential campaigns, but the President has to be the chief fundraiser for his party before and during elections. It has become customary for the Presidential candidate to establish a separate campaign committee to handle the intricate operation of a large and specialized campaign staff.

The duties of the President never stop, not even for an instant, during his term. The press corps wishes to be kept aware



LEFT: After World War I, President Wilson (*center*) traveled to Paris with other members of the American Peace Commission to negotiate the Versailles treaty. Wilson was the first U.S. President to conduct business outside of the country during his term of office.

National Archives, 111-SC-47395

RIGHT: Suffragettes register to work as volunteers during World War I. Until the passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, women were one of several groups excluded from full participation in government.

National Archives, 165-WW-600A-1

of his movements and actions in the event of illness or a personal tragedy. His responsibility for the nation's nuclear forces is inescapable, and the mechanism for invoking that terrible option is never far from his side. Should the President become ill or need medical attention, the public expects to be informed about his condition and prognosis for recovery. The activities of his wife (the First Lady) and members of his family receive almost as much attention as the President himself. To say that the President is the constant object of national attention understates the degree to which he is in the spotlight of media coverage and public concern.

This modern expansion of the Presidency would have seemed impossible when George Washington took his oath of office at New York's city hall in 1789. The experiment in constitutional and democratic government that was being launched depended on Washington's willingness to accept the office of President. Support for the new Constitution rested in part on the knowledge that Washington would be the first Chief Executive. The first President was an aristocrat, but he approached his new office without seeking to achieve exalted status or arbitrary power. He was devoted to the principles of republican government and was well aware that he was setting precedents. During the 8 years

that followed, he defined the institution that the Constitution had only outlined in the broadest terms.

In the process, Washington enabled the new republic to survive its early years. He overcame the emergence of political parties and partisan rivalries, withstood the instability in the fledgling economy, and avoided difficulties with the more powerful nations of Europe. Perhaps most important of all, he laid the basis for a structure of a workable national government. Washington supplied what the Articles of Confederation had lacked: a strong President not tied to the legislative branch but part of the constitutional system. Washington asserted his authority in areas where the Constitution did not specify whether the Congress or the President was to act. Yet Washington respected Congress and maintained good relations with the lawmakers.

The next several Chief Executives—John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and John Quincy Adams—added their contributions to the evolving institution of the Presidency. John Adams's nomination of John Marshall to be Chief Justice of the United States proved a decisive step in the development of the judiciary as a force in national life. The Louisiana Purchase, during Jefferson's administration, doubled the size of the United States and showed how the powers

of the office could be stretched to take advantage of historic opportunities. The national political system emerged during this period, and the young republic survived the foreign crises and domestic issues of the years between 1800 and 1828. The War of 1812, which occurred because of disputes with Great Britain arising from the Napoleonic Wars, was the one important military conflict of this period.

The war ended in a kind of diplomatic and military stalemate, but the nation found its independence reaffirmed and its destiny ratified. A fervor of nationalistic spirit resulted, along with an expansion of political democracy for white, male Americans. Black Americans were still, for the most part, enslaved in the South, Native Americans were displaced and persecuted, and women lacked even a measure of full political and social rights. These problems were not addressed as the nation grew. The population tripled, and millions of pioneers pushed past the Appalachian frontier into the Mississippi Valley and beyond. The United States was a growing, more confident nation of two dozen states during the 1820s.

The Presidents from Andrew Jackson through James Buchanan confronted the issues that expansion and social problems presented. The relationship of the federal government to the states, the role of the



government in promoting economic growth, the balance of sectional power—all these dilemmas expressed themselves in the turbulent politics of the pre-Civil War era. Added to this mix of concerns was the divisive and explosive issue of human slavery and the fate of blacks in the South. Where did the power reside to deal with this subject? Were the states sovereign and able to determine what their society and lifestyle should be? Did the power to regulate slavery or abolish human bondage lie with the national government? The President became a focal point for the resolution of these problems as the North and South clashed over the South's "peculiar institution" during the 1840s and 1850s. As the tide of settlement pushed westward, a related problem emerged. Should these new territories be admitted to the Union as free or slave states?

The western influence on the Presidency became evident during this same period. Ten new states in the South and West joined the Union. Andrew Jackson became the first westerner to occupy the White House, and three other Chief Executives from the same region followed him in the next decade and a half—William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, and Zachary Taylor. American Indians were the greatest losers in the western move-

ment as they were shoved aside and driven into territories far from their familiar homes.

All of the Presidents in these years contributed to the drive to the West and then grappled with the consequences for the slavery issue. Texas was a problem for Martin Van Buren and John Tyler. James K. Polk came into office as an advocate of expansion, which he achieved through war and diplomacy that pushed U.S. boundaries to the Pacific. The aftermath of the Mexican War and the territorial quarrels that ensued shaped the Presidencies of Zachary Taylor and Millard Fillmore. During the 1850s Franklin Pierce and James Buchanan sought to find ways to end the social turmoil that erupted in the violence of "Bleeding Kansas." It was becoming evident that the slavery issue was straining the ties that bound the nation together.

By the 1860s the people of the United States found it impossible to resolve the slavery problem without civil war. Abraham Lincoln and the new Republican Party wanted to put slavery on the road to eventual extinction. The South wanted slavery to live and grow. Sectional tensions led to the outbreak of war, but Lincoln's Presidential leadership helped to preserve the Union and end slavery. After Lincoln was assassinated in 1865, the task of

reconstruction fell into the hands of Andrew Johnson. His inability to understand the motives and attitudes of the Republicans of the North contributed to the bitter period that followed. Although the passage of the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution represented notable achievements, the nation did not succeed in providing enduring and meaningful civil rights and political opportunity to the new black citizens.

During the late 19th century the United States moved away from the promise of human equality that had been implicit in Reconstruction. Good relations between northern and southern whites were restored, largely at the expense of black Americans, by the creation of a segregation system that would last until the 1960s. At the same time, the nation was becoming more industrialized and more urbanized. By the time of William McKinley's death in 1901, the Union had grown to 45 states, and the rise of large corporations and a modern economy was reshaping American life. The nation watched the achievements of such inventors as Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas Edison and read of the entrepreneurial activities of such industrialists as Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and James J. Hill.

During the 40 years after 1880, millions of immigrants came to the United States

William Howard Taft's tenure, like that of other Progressive Era Presidents, was marked by political reform and industrial regulation.

Library of Congress



in search of economic opportunity. Within the nation's borders, many citizens left the countryside for city life. The general standard of living improved, but the pace of social change brought persistent problems. Children worked long hours in factories and mills. Industrial safety was inadequate, and hundreds of thousands of accidents occurred on the job each year. Pensions, workman's compensation laws, and unemployment insurance did not exist. Labor unions sought to organize skilled workers. The great mass of industrial workers had no defense against the inequities of the marketplace.

Westward settlement ended as the 19th century closed. American Indians were driven onto reservations, and their culture came under assault. The West boomed as prospectors, cattlemen, and wheat farmers pursued prosperity. When the economy faltered in the 1890s, agrarian discontent led to the rise of the People's Party, or the Populists, across the South and West. The return of good times ended that movement as the new century neared.

By 1898 the United States had become a world power. The war with Spain over Cuba produced a dazzling military triumph and added the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico to the nation's overseas possessions. The imperialistic surge ebbed somewhat during the first two decades of

the 20th century as the burden of empire became apparent. In 1912 the last of the 2 contiguous 48 states, Arizona and New Mexico, were admitted to the Union. Alaska and Hawaii would not be added until 1958 and 1959 respectively.

During the first two decades of the 20th century, the nation experienced a period of political reform and moral uplift that has come to be called the Progressive Era. Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson dealt with the issue of the extent to which the national government should regulate an industrial society in order to relieve social injustice and promote a more equitable nation. The programs they pursued included substantial changes in the role of political parties and special interests in the making of national policies, passage of legislation to restrain big business and mitigate the effects of industrialism, and conservation and protection of natural resources. Roosevelt and Wilson especially relied on the power of the federal government and the expertise of the regulatory agencies to deal with a wide range of social problems. In time the Progressives also envisioned for themselves a larger world role in promoting a more stable international order. Woodrow Wilson would say that the United States intervened in the First World War to make the world

"safe for democracy," but the Versailles treaty and the failure of the United States to enter the League of Nations frustrated his idealistic vision.

By the end of the First World War, the age of reform had passed, and the nation entered an era that President Warren G. Harding called "normalcy." For the first time half the population lived in urban areas. The rise of a mass society and culture also marked the decade of the 1920s. The automobile was changing the lifestyle of the United States, and the infant airlines began a slow process of growth that would eventually tie nations and continents together. It was not, however, a period of vigorous political change. The Republicans dominated the electoral landscape, and Calvin Coolidge was President as the stock market boomed and the economy expanded.

Beneath the facade of prosperity, problems of unequal income distribution, a weakened banking system, and a depressed farm sector signaled possible trouble. The stock market crash in the fall of 1929 began a sequence of events that led to the Great Depression, which lasted until the beginning of World War II. In a 1928 victory over Alfred E. Smith, President Herbert Hoover had been elected as the masterful social engineer who could sustain the nation's economic health. When



In an attempt to revive the economy and alleviate the social hardships caused by the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, which helped to establish the idea of the modern welfare state.

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the Depression hit, his policies did more to combat the problems than those any previous President had attempted during hard times. It was not enough. Hoover failed to deal effectively with the millions of unemployed who needed government assistance, and his emphasis on voluntary action over government programs seemed inadequate for the crisis that the United States confronted. Hoover's grim personal manner added to the impression of insensitivity that doomed him politically.

Historians are still arguing over who was the first "modern" President in the style that has become familiar to the nation. William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Woodrow Wilson all made important contributions to the emergence of a powerful and purposeful Presidency between 1897 and 1921, but the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932 over Herbert Hoover brought to Washington a political leader who reshaped the office and the country during the unprecedented 12 years of his administration. Roosevelt's New Deal represented a forceful campaign to find measures that would lift the economy out of its doldrums. The New Deal programs had mixed results, and the

Second World War did more to revive the economy, in part because so much more money was spent on fighting the war than had been expended on fighting the Depression. In the process, however, Roosevelt demonstrated what a President could do to lift the nation's spirits in a crisis, helped to create the foundations of a modern welfare state, and made it impossible for any successor to remain passive in the face of an economic downturn. The size of the Presidency also expanded as Roosevelt reached out to academics and experts for advice and ideas.

Roosevelt became a world leader as no President before him had done. The economic problems of the 1930s contributed to the emergence of totalitarian leadership in Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, who joined with like-minded aggressors in Italy and Japan to threaten world peace. Meeting the challenge of the Second World War led Roosevelt to begin establishment of what has been called the national security state. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the nation into the world conflict and fostered the rise of the military power of the United States to new and higher levels. Eventual

defeat of Germany in May 1945 came at a high cost in terms of lives and resources. The atomic bomb brought the surrender of Japan 3 months later. The United States looked to the United Nations and the doctrine of collective security to prevent another world war and to maintain the coalition that had produced victory.

Instead, a "cold war" between the United States and its wartime ally the Soviet Union began during the years 1945–47 and continued for more than 40 years. The Presidents from Harry S. Truman to George Bush who confronted these challenges found the range of their responsibilities and the size of their staffs continually expanding and becoming more complex. The President of the United States was now expected to maintain peace in a complex and interdependent world while fostering domestic stability and prosperity.

On the domestic scene, the Presidents since the Second World War have relied on instruments of the federal government to lessen the effects of recessions and to keep inflation under control. The Chief Executives have also played important roles in encouraging the nation's development as an industrial-scientific-technological society. One central example of this development is the space program during the 1950s and 1960s, which received much



In November 1974 Gerald Ford met with Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev in Vladivostok, U.S.S.R. Cold war relations with the Soviet Union troubled Presidents Harry Truman to George Bush.

Gerald R. Ford Library

of its impetus from the leadership of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson and landed a man on the moon by 1969. Other Presidents, such as Dwight D. Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan, gained immense political popularity from their leadership during times of economic prosperity and growth.

Not all Americans shared in the bounty of the postwar period or enjoyed the full rights of other citizens. African Americans struggled during these same years to achieve their share of the national dream. The 1960s brought urban riots as a growing black lower class expressed its discontent with the squalor of life in the ghettos of the nation's cities. Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and women articulated similar and other grievances. During the 1960s Lyndon B. Johnson and his Great Society addressed these problems with mixed results, and the struggle for a just and equitable society tested the leadership of the Presidents who followed him. That society remains an ideal still being sought as the 20th century nears its close.

Foreign policy was the most pressing concern for all the Presidents in the four decades after 1945. The demands of the cold war on resources and lives were formidable. The specter of nuclear annihilation formed an ominous background for every foreign policy judgment. Armed conflicts in Korea during the 1950s and in

Vietnam during the 1960s and 1970s produced frustration and division at home. In the case of Vietnam in particular, the wounds from that defeat festered for almost two decades after the actual American involvement ended in the early 1970s. The nation has not yet fully resolved its ambivalent feelings about the war.

Other foreign policy initiatives of the Presidents after 1945 did not produce such tragedy and dissension. The economic capacity and military power of the United States sometimes worked in the cause of peace and hope. Harry S. Truman's Marshall plan helped rehabilitate the economy of Western Europe after World War II. Dwight D. Eisenhower sought a safer world through his Atoms for Peace program. Richard Nixon pursued a policy of détente with the Soviet Union and opened better relations with the People's Republic of China. Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan both tried in different ways to achieve arms control with the Soviet Union.

In spite of all these accomplishments, the American Presidency seemed to be in great trouble during the 1970s. Richard Nixon could claim foreign policy successes during his Presidency, including an end to American involvement in Vietnam, but the Watergate scandal drove him from office in disgrace. Gerald Ford restored some confidence in the institution but was not able to

convince voters to keep him in the White House. Jimmy Carter began his Presidency with bright hopes in 1977 but left office 4 years later with economic conditions in disarray and another Presidency that failed to last two full terms.

By the end of the 1980s, Ronald Reagan's rhetorical skill, his personal optimism, and the expansion of the economy contributed to a better national mood and the sense that the Presidency could be an instrument of purpose and effectiveness. However, this renewed optimism was accompanied by a rapidly expanding national debt and an intractable federal budget deficit. These as well as the challenges presented by the fall of communism and continuing problems in the Middle East and Africa marked the Presidency of George Bush, who was unable to maintain the momentum of the Persian gulf victory to win a second election. The new Chief Executive, William J. Clinton, continues to grapple with the problems of his predecessors while facing the new challenges of the 1990s.

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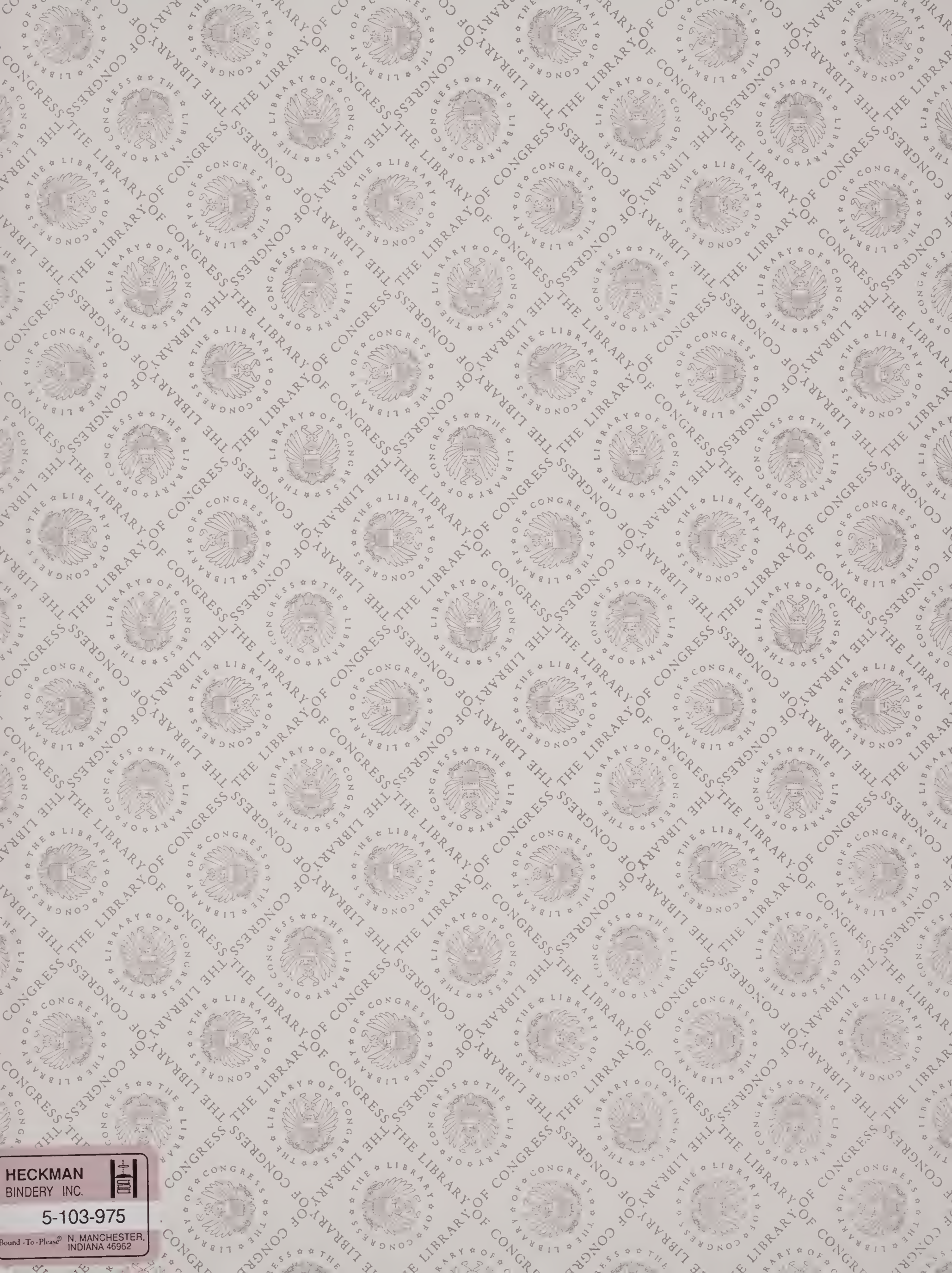
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